IS VolumeSS3

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These are the novel illustrations that were included in the novel that came with BR/DVD 3

InfiniteStratos
インフィニット・ストラトス
IS
弓弦イズル
IZURU YUMIZURU
Blu-ray/DVD Vol.3
初回生産特典 書き下ろし小説②
「特別編【鈴／セシリア】」

Chapter 1: Rin's Chapter--Loving the You Beside Me Now.

"U~…"

In a first year dorm room of IS Academy, a girl is sleeping soundly.

"Ack, ack…, looks like…I got the summer flu…"

The girl's called Huang Lingyin. As the representative cadet of China, she's the registered pilot of the IS [Shenlong].

(What went wrong…? Did I eat too much shaved ice? Or is it because I slept in the nude while it was hot? Or is it because I kept the air-conditioning running?)

Though she continued to think, she couldn't concentrate.

Her head started to ache.

Her consciousness went blurry, and the ceiling looked like it was spinning around.

And her body was so hot that it was limp. She didn’t even have enough strength to turn on the TV.

She didn’t have any appetite, yet she felt hungry, and she couldn't sleep well.

(Ah…this is…bad…)

Her roommate Tina went back to her country, America , and now, Rin’s the only one in the room.

‘’Will I die like this here?’’

‘’Alone in another country—’’

Thinking about this, a terrifying thought struck her, perhaps because she got weak due to the illness.

Her consciousness started getting blurry, and she got further away from the ceiling.

‘’Am I really going to die like this?’’

On thinking about this, a name naturally came out from Rin’s mouth.

"Ichika…"

"Oh."

"Eh…?"

At first, she thought that she was just imagining it.

But on seeing Ichika appear right in front of her, Rin blinked twice, and realized that this was reality.

"Wh, why, why, why are you here!?"

Unable to understand the sudden change in situation, Rin even forgot about her fever and sat up.

But that force lasted only for a moment, and she immediately sank back onto the blanket weakly.

"Oi oi. What are you doing? Lie down."

Ichika gently hugged Rin, who fell forward, and made her lie on the bed.

"Shu, shut up…if it's like this, I…ack, ack!"

"Ah, see? Don't force yourself to talk. Here, drink this. It'll replenish your liquids and sugars."

While saying that, Ichika passed the sports drink to Rin.

Rin obediently accepted the drink and took a gulp. She then turned to Ichika and asked.

"And, and then? Why are you in my room?"

…Ha!?

Rin suddenly thought of something.

(Do, don't, don't tell me he wanted to do whatever he wanted while I was sick—)

[I can do whatever I want to the tough Rin now. Kehehe.]

[STOP, STOP IT, IDIOT! I'LL KILL YOU!?]

[Oi oi, now's your chance to act tough. Ora—, I'll strip you, I'll strip!]

[NO~! YOU BEAST! FRUIT, TRAITOR~!]

--Too much. That was too much.

(I, I think my fever made me weird…)

It's true. Right now, her mind's not really okay.

''It would be better if the fantasy just now was a little more sentimental.''

(Ahh, but…)

[Don't think about it. Just enjoy it.]

(This Ichika may not be that bad…)

Te! Bruce Lee!

She bemoaned herself.

On a side note, Rin should be on Jackie Chan's side, but she doesn't think she's the eldest.

"Why? Because you didn't show up."

"Eh?"

''Didn't show up? Me? –Do, don't tell me?"

[Since Rin didn't come over to my room, I came over. My Esperanza.]

[Really? Sweet.]

[How troublesome, Dragon-chan. Hey, baby…]

Ahhh, stop. Just stop!

(If this keeps up, my headache's going to get aggravated…)

The correct saying should be 'my head will hurt' or ' the headache will worsen', but she doesn't even have time to correct it.

Speaking of which, her head's hurting at a 12/10 rating because of the flu and other reasons.

"Like I said, we agreed to go meet our primary school friends today, but since Rin didn't show up, I felt something was odd and came over to your room."

--Our other friends couldn't enter IS Academy since they're outsiders. Ichika added.

It seems like only Ichika came over to check on Rin.

(Uu…I forgot due to the headache…)

Speaking of which, her phone did seem to ring a few times.

She felt really bad, but on the other hand, she felt somewhat happy too.

(Ichika was concerned about me…)

Thinking about this, her heart pounded again.

“Anyway, sleep well for today. I’ll take care of you.”

“U, un…”

Rin nodded her head obediently.

Right now, she’s alone with ichika.

And he’s taking care of her. He was just concerned about her.

This made Rin really happy.

(Nn…I think I won something…)

Extremely frail due to the illness, Rin showed a weak smile.

At that moment, a wet towel was placed on her forehead.

“Ah, sorry. Was it cold?”

“No, it’s not that. I was just shocked…it feels good…”

Haa…she sighed, and the hot air came out.

This sounded really erotic, and Ichika was a little moved.

“…”

“…”

Rin and Ichika soon ended their conversation, and both became silent.

But rather than it being an awkward silence, it was more like a gentle silence as both of them understood each other.

(Being alone with Ichika… being alone with Ichika…)

DOKI DOKI. The intense heartbeat gradually heated up her heart.

Rin secretly glanced at Ichika so as not to be seen. Either the summer flu or the heart in love was messing around as the heat went up and made her face blush.

(Ichika, he became so cool after entering high school… he's a lot taller than when he was in second year of middle school…)

"Rin."

--DOKI!!

"Wha, what is it?"

She tried to act calm, but Rin's pitch went higher by half an octave.

(U, uwa! Was I spotted? I, it's okay, right?)

"You haven't eaten anything since morning, right? Do you have any appetite?"

"No, not really… maybe my stomach's a little hungry …"

"Really? Then I'll make something. What do you want to eat?"

"Cold Chinese…"

"Oi, oi, better eat something you can digest well."

"How rude… noodles are the best food originated from China… it's good for digestion…"

"Gruel will do, right?"

Ichika made the decision without listening to her.

But Rin just thought 'how nice…' with regards to this somewhat forceful manner.

"Ah, I don't want something too hot. Ju, just make wheat tea gruel."

Rin said that in a stiff tone as she turned her face away, not wanting to let her reddish face be seen.

"Got it, got it. Then, please wait for a while."

“U, un.”

On hearing Rin’s reply, Ichika nodded his head and left the room to use the kitchen.

Rin was left alone in the room, but the loneliness she felt just now disappeared without a trace as she gently patted the towel on her forehead.

“Ehehe…”

‘’I’m so happy.’’

‘’Ichika thought of me.’’

‘’Only concerned for me.’’

This was something Rin felt really happy about.

(Arre…? Didn’t the same thing happen during Middle School…)

She searched through her memory in a vague manner, and couldn’t think of it. As expected, she still had a fever.

(That was, during…the rainy season…I forgot to bring my umbrella. I ran off, and got a cold…)

--That was a lie. That didn't happen at all.

"…"

Actually, she wanted to get into Ichika's umbrella, so she looked around for him.

And then, she did find Ichika, but there was already a girl with him.

Hitozato Karin.

She was a classmate of Ichika and Rin. She would often go out to play with Gotanda Dan, Mitarai Kazuma, and the group formed by Nakanoi Riefumi and Toumoto Eri.

On first impression, she looked 'cute and quiet'.

She seemed somewhat distant from the rest, but she could get along well with everyone.

Her personality was the complete opposite of Rin, but they had quite the good friendship, which made up for it.

(That Karin confessed to Ichika…)

''I wanted to support her as a friend.''

"…"

Well, she lied again—

(I, I was really… scared… I thought that I couldn't take it if Ichika said OK…)

Thinking about how devastated she was, tears welled up in Rin's eyes.

(I, I ran away at the last moment… like an idiot…)

She forcefully rubbed her eyes to wipe away the tears.

(But in the end, Ichika came to see me while I took leave the next day, and took care of me…)

Actually, she wanted to listen to the reply of the confession.

But she didn't manage to hear it.

(Maybe I can listen to it now…)

After that, what she heard was that Ichika didn’t go out with Karin.

She was afraid to find out the reason.

(But, but I obviously, Ichika—)

Kachunk.

“Oh, Rin. Sorry to keep you waiting.”

“Y, yo, you! At least knock the door first!”

‘’It’s not that my heart pounded! Idiot!’’

--She couldn’t say it even if her mouth broke, but her body sat up honestly.

“Sorry. I neglected it since it was Rin.”

“Wha, what do you mean by that? Idiot…”

She was a little happy, but she couldn’t express it.

“Hoi, I made wheat tea gruel and let it cool. It won’t be too hot now.”

"Tha, thanks…"

"Hm? How honest."

"HA, HA!? I DON'T KNOW W WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT! WHAT ABOUT BEING HONEST!? IT'S NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL! THANKING SOMEONE IS WHAT SOMEONE IS EXPECTED TO DO!!!"

"Got it got it. Don't shout so loudly like this. You're going to collapse."

"Fu, humph!"

Rin laid down as she seemed to slam her head into her pillow.

Putting the utensils down on the table beside him, Ichika took a chair to put it beside him.

"Then, okay, can you get up?"

Though it didn't seem something he should be saying to someone so lively just now, but on hearing that, Rin forced herself to support her upper body.

"…eed me…"

"Hm?"

"So, so I say! Feed me…"

"Ahh, un. Okay."

Ichika took the spoon, and took up a mouth-sized portion of gruel.

"Rin, aahn."

"Ah, aahn…"

Ammm… mogu.

"Is it good?"

"Y-yeah…"

She didn't really understand what the taste was, but to the heating body, the gruel made from the wheat tea felt extremely cooling.

"Then good. Here, ahn."

"Ah-an…"

Ammm… mogu.

Close mouth, chew. Close mouth, chew.

This continued on, and half a minute later, the gruel was all gone.

“Bu, but, well, it was too bland. Unsatisfactory. It would be alright if you just added some mustard in.”

“I say, eating spicy food is bad for your stomach.”

“My, my stomach’s fine!”

“Yes yes…here, ahn.”

“Ah, ahn.”

Ammm…mogu.

“Speaking of mustard, I remembered how back in middle school we used to go to that ‘Fujiryuu’ shop a lot for that roasted mustard noodles."

“Ah—that was really nice.”

"And the students all had large bowls of stuff stacked up freely."

"You guys always ate them in one large bowl after another."

"Speaking of which, you're the only one amongst the girls who ate one huge bowl."

"Sh, shut up! Why would I remember something like that!"

It should be mentioned, after Ichika pointed that out to Rin, she only ordered normal bowls after that.

Of course, she felt ashamed that other boys teased her for being a big eater, but two days later, she realized that 'it's worth it to get more for the same price', and stopped doing that.

Basically, there was no meaning to hide it.

Either way, she did punch Ichika hard the first time she met him.

(That was, well, eh… my bad… but, I did apologize after that…)

But well, that was in the past, and it's Ichika's virtue not to be fussy about such things.

"Tha, thanks for your hospitality."

"Oh, almost finished. You'll be fine after some rest."

Ichika cleared up all the utensils as he said that, and left the room.

"…"

Forcefully sinking her head into her pillow, Rin asked absentmindedly.

(I'll just ask today since there's a chance.)

Though there was something she was really mindful of , the will not to run away like last time was burning strongly too.

After that, it had been 5 minutes since Ichika came back, but to her, it felt like more than an hour had passed .

“I, Ichika.”

“Hm?”

“Well… I got something I want to ask you…”

“What? My deposits’ a secret.”

I’ve been spending a lot recently. Ichika noted wryly.

“It, it’s not that, idiot.”

“What is it then?”

“We, well…erm…du, during middle school…”

She wanted to say it, she wanted to ask it, yet her voice went softer.

(Ahh, really! Go me, go!)

Clenching her fist tightly under the blanket, Rin finally asked,

“Why, why did you not go out with Karin!?”

--I said it!

‘’I said it.’’

‘’Is this really good? Is it really alright to ask him about that? It’s better not to let him recall that, right?

Her mind continued to spin about.

At that moment, the stunned Ichika opened his mouth,

“…Eh?”

“So, so I say! You were confessed to, right?”

“Wha, what…you knew about that?”

“Y-yeah…”

‘’I heard that from my friend!’’ It’s better for her not to say that.

Even a scaredy cat who doesn’t know the truth doesn’t want to be someone despicable for telling lies.

She couldn’t step aside with regards to that.

“Ahh—that…”

“Ka, Karin was that cute. You didn’t hate her, right?”

“Eve, even if you say that, in fact, Hitozato-san had no reason to like me.”

“Eh…?”

For an instant, Rin was stunned as she couldn’t understand Ichika’s words.

“Like I said, it was Kazuma. Mitarai Kazuma. Hitozato-san liked him.”

“Haa…? The, then, why did she confess to you…”

That’s what she didn’t understand.

Seeing that Rin wanted to know what was going on, Ichika folded his arms and answered.

“Most likely, she got the wrong person, right? Me, Kazuma, Dan, we were always together.”

"What do you mean she identified the wrong person? That's not possible, right!?"

"Nope, it was like that! Definitely."

"Why!?"

"Because Hitozato-san would always ask me about Kazuma every time she talked to me. Though you probably didn't know."

"Re, really…?"

She didn't know at all.

Of course, they had a good relationship. Rin was the type of girl who would be in the center of attention, so she would often hear stories about romance. Even so, this was the first time she heard about this. Rin was stunned that she didn't understand Karin at all.

Thinking about this, she seemed to turn limp for a while.

(I, I, I kept misunderstanding for so many years…)

An idiot, she was an idiot. There was nothing more stupid than this.

But perhaps because of the fever due to the flu, she couldn’t even get angry at all.

“Ahaha…”

Anyway, she could only laugh dryly.

“Ahahaha…haa.”

--Orz.

“So I said that her confession should go to Kazuma.”

“Fuu…”

‘’I’M NOT INTERESTED IN THAT TOPIC ANYMORE !’’

‘’…Impossible. Even till now, I’m still friends with Karin.’’

“Those two should be dating, right? Ah, but Kazuma said that he had to date a really popular girl. Hm? But

since everyone just met today after a long time, I was just wondering."

Rin sighed softly, not wanting to let Ichika realize this as he folded his arms.

"Why didn't she confess immediately?"

"…Wouldn't a wrong confession be really embarrassing…"

"Eh? What did you say?"

"No, nothing! That's enough, I'm going to sleep!"

"Really? Okay then, I'll stay in this room for now. Just tell me if there's anything. I'll stay at the table here so that I won't bother you."

"Eh?"

"What do you mean by that?"

"No, well…sta, staying here…"

"? That's the case."

Ichika revealed a look of disbelief.

This natural kindness made Rin blush happily.

“The, then, well…thanks…”

Rin thanked softly, and she got gradually attacked by the sleep monster that came with her satisfaction of being full.

And with Ichika beside her, she entered dreamland with a hazy consciousness and a sense of comfort.

It was an orange memory.

“I, Ichika, here.”

“What is it, Rin? Why are you so formal?”

After school, during the dusk of orange, there was only two people in the orange classroom, facing each other as they sat at the orange table.

Both of them were wearing the school uniform of Nanatsuno Middle School. Ichika was wearing the Gakuran, while Rin was wearing the sailor uniform.

“We, well. I was thinking if I should change my hairstyle. What do you think?”

Squirming about, Rin asked in a manner completely different than usual.

Wanting to know Ichika’s response, the timid girl’s heart made her eyes float up.

“Eh? Why? That hairstyle suits you, Rin.”

“Eh, really!?”

Rin smiled like a flower blooming.

Full of joy, Rin played with her ponytails.

“Re, really? I see, so it suits me well. Ehehe… ♪”

“? Such a strange person.”

“Who, who are you calling strange!?”

“Wah wah!? St, stop it! Stop kicking me!”

“Wha, what what what!?”

DOKADOKADOKADOKADOKA!!

“GYYAAAAHHH—!!!”

“Fu, fuu…what now…idiot…”

Rin still remembered what was said that evening.

She definitely would not forget about it.

The memory of the orange love—

(Un...)

Having woken up, Rin looked at the clock on the wall. It seemed that she had slept for about 2 hours.

“Ichika...is he around?”

“What's wrong?”

Ichika immediately came out after he was called.

(He really kept me company me all the time...)

Her heart felt really unbearable.

But this felt as sweet as a forbidden sweet poison, full of allure.

“We, well...I got a lot of sweat on me, so I was hoping you could wipe my body...”

--This, eh!?

Unbelievable words came out from her mouth.

(Wha, what am I saying!?...is, isn't it weird? It's weird, right!?)

DOKI DOKI. Her heart beat wildly again.

Though she wanted to control the Red Hare Horse that was rampaging, it didn't go well.

“So, so I say...wipe my body...”

“No, that's—”

"Di, didn't you say that you would do anything?"

"No, even then, that's—"

"S-Shut up shut up shut up! You're my slave! Listen to me!"

Blushing really hard, Rin flailed as she said that.

Ichika looked troubled as he scratched his head, and forced himself to nod his head.

"Slave or what, really you...haa, never mind. Fine."

--Eh? Eh?

Though it was shocking of her to say that, it was even more shocking to hear Ichika agree with it.

But now, it meant that the embarrassment was on Rin.

Either way, she had to take her clothes off and reveal herself if she needed to wipe her body.

(U, uuwaah...wha, what...I just said it out of impulse. Thi, this, this means that I have to strip here...show, show my naked body in front of Ichika...)

The more she thought about it, the more she felt that it was shameful.

Seeing that even the ears had dyed red, Rin hurriedly hid inside the blanket.

“...”

“What's wrong?”

“No, nothing at all! Turn over there, idiot!”

Then, she forced herself and threw the pillow.

Grabbing the pillow with his right hand and putting it down at Rin's waist to support her, Ichika walked to the bathroom to wet the towel.

(Wh, what, wasn't that kind of gentle...)

She shook her head around to shake that giggling expression of hers.

(Why, why did I say such a thing...)

It was already past the level of being bold.

(I, I wasn't treated as a weirdo...)

No matter how shocked or lost Ichika was, he wouldn't use that as a reason to label her as weird. She knew that.

But because this was IS Academy, the girls are as much as what the term implied. Amongst that, getting first place in affection level with Ichika would be the tough question.

(Bu, but, what is it...do, don't tell me...that idiot Ichika would treat me as someone of the opposite gender...)

Rin swallowed her little expectations and anxiety with her saliva, and put her hand on her pajamas.

(Uu, at least I should have some breasts...)

I can't think about this.

Though she does beat out Laura by a little in terms of the size, Laura, who's almost void in that aspect, was daring enough to go naked and snuggle into the bed—that was really bold.

In other words, she had to go to this extent or further.

(More than that, what should I do...what...)

Tick, tick...she undid her buttons.

As she wasn't wearing underwear in the first place, she just undid her buttons, and her breasts were revealed .

(Uu~...)

Realizing the small size of her breasts again, she felt pitiful and angry.

“I tried lots of ways...”

“What ways?”

“AHHHHHHH!!?”

Rin nearly jumped up in shock the moment she heard Ichika's voice from behind. No, she jumped up softly.

“Wha, what now? Why are you so loud out of a sudden?”

“Do, don't, don't stand behind me like that!?”

"Why? Am I some kind of assassin?"

"S-Shut up shut up shut up!!"

No, you're the noisy one. Ichika thought as he held Rin's head.

Just like that, Rin went completely silent out of embarrassment.

“Then, I'll wipe from the back.”

“Nn, un...”

With her upper body naked, Rin covered her breasts and turned her back on Ichika.

As it felt exceptionally alluring, Ichika's heart started to beat wildly.

However, Rin couldn't see Ichika's reaction as her back was facing him.

And at the time, Rin didn't have the luxury to observe him like this now.

“...”

“...”

Clak clak clak...

Ichika and Rin didn't say anything as time passed by.

Unlike the comfortable silence from before, it was now a delicate silence for both sides.

(Ahh, my back...feels so good...)

The icy towel wiped the skin comfortably.

Everytime it touched the warm body gently, Rin would curl up slightly due to the numbing itchiness and ecstasy.

“Mn...ahh...”

“Oi, oi, stop making such strange sounds.”

“U, un...sorry.”

“No, it's not really something you need to apologize about...”

“...”

“...”

In the end, they continued the silence, and three minutes later, the wiping was complete.

“Do, done.”

Ichika's pitch felt like it was higher, as his heart was racing because of the unexpected act of Rin.

"..."

"Rin?"

"...The front too..."

"Eh?"

"The, the front...well, wipe it..."

"Wha, what are you saying!?"

"It, it's alright, right...or, you hate girls with small breasts...?"

"Tha, that's not the point, right..."

Ichika was at his wits end on hearing the slight trembling in Rin's voice.

She was not someone who would say this normally.

What's going on? Thinking this, he felt that he couldn't leave Rin alone like this.

“Ahh, really. I got it!”

“Eh?”

“In exchange, you can't get angry! You can't hit me or kick me!”

“Wh, what are you treating me as...”

Rin argued back, but her voice was soft.

Keeping her back at Ichika, Rin secretly glanced behind and moved the hands covering the breasts.

Of course, Ichika couldn't see them directly from behind.

But, Rin's face went all red as she bit her lips, since she felt embarrassed about having to reveal herself completely.

(The, source of this heat...source of this heat...source of this heat...)

While thinking about that, Ichika's hands gently went around to her front.

(He, he touched them...Ichika, he touched them, my breasts...)

Her heart was beating so wildly it went erratic. Right now, she was worried that her heartbeat got revealed.

But before Rin could get emotionally ready, Ichika's hands touched her breasts through the towel.

“!!...”

“...”

The irritating silence happened again.

Rin couldn't take this rock-gnashing-like feeling and opened her mouth.

“The, they're small, right...”

“Tha, that's not true...well,...they're nice to touch.”

“Pervert...”

“Shu, shut up.”

That exchange went around between Ichika and Rin as they blushed and continued with the wiping.

…

……

……

“The, then, seems like things are okay now. I'll go back to my room then.”

“U, un, thanks.”

Rin put on her clothes again and snuggled back into the blanket. She couldn't look at Ichika in the eyes due to the embarrassment.

But at the same time Ichika was looking up at a corner of the ceiling when he was talking to Rin.

“Bye then.”

Ichika hurriedly left the room.

Rin managed to take of glimpse of Ichika as he left, and he was as red as her now.

(He's blushing, which means, he realized...)

--I'm a girl.

“...Ehehe.”

Rin smiled happily as she used her hand to cover her rapidly beating chest, DOKI DOKI.

And then, she got taken into a gentle slumber by the sleep monster.

(I love Ichika...I won't lose to anyone. I won't.)

With this oath of love, girl, pursue forward, and run towards the battlefield—

Chapter 2: Cecilia's Chapter--Noblesse Oblige

In the middle of summer, Ichika was walking alone under the hot and intense summer sun.

"Un, I finally managed to get to the street in front of the station, and I already planned to go out with Kazuma and Dan."

Muttering to himself that he failed so badly, Ichika continued to walk on aimlessly.

(Mn, what do I do now…it's a rare chance to go to the game parlor, isn't it? Guess not. It seems that I spent a lot of money on some unimportant stuff…)

A thorough explanation behind this scenario would have to involve the girls around Ichika.

Houki, Cecilia, Rin, Charlotte and Laura. As he went out to play with these five girls, his high school funds vanished in a puff of smoke.

(But really, other than Houki, everyone's a representative cadet. It can't be helped that the government's giving money.)

Ichika may have let the girls treat for the first time, but he would politely decline if it was twice or more.

It was because Ichika would pay like this that those five girls developed feelings for him that would not fade.

(Hn…?)

Suddenly, someone ran over from the other side.

Even in the middle of the street that was crowded with people walking around, that figure stood out amongst them.

The bright blond hair extended to below her waist, glittering under the sunlight.

And as she walked over, that swaying posture dazzled under the sun as much as ever.

She was wearing a super high-class summer dress, and the high quality lace immediately attracted attention.

It just so happened that Ichika knew this eye-catching person.

“Cecilia!?”

"I, Ichika-san!?"

Most likely, she came running in from somewhere, since she was breathing so hard.

Cecilia first checked on her surroundings, and then found a photo booth beside a convenience shop.

"Ichika-san, over there!"

"Eh? Uwah!? O, oi! Why are you dragging me!?"

"Hurry!"

Cecilia aggressively showed her personality, and Ichika was dragged together into the cramped space.

"…"

"Erm…"

Ichika found himself side by side with Cecilia in that narrow space, and the close distance made his heart race.

(Uu... That's really a nice smell…is, is that perfume?)

Ichika started to lose himself to the high-class perfume that gave a slight aroma, and the humidity in the cramped space made Ichika start to sweat like crazy.

“Ce, Cecilia, what’s wrong? Who’s chasing you?”

“Eh, ehh…well, a group of men dressed in black…”

“That’s really an interesting development. Just like a movie.”

Ichika joked around to hide his awkwardness of them being stuck together.

But he shut up on seeing Cecilia’s gloomy expression.

(Uu…can’t stand it. Really…)

(Fuu…seems like we got away.)

Cecilia pat her chest a few times, and turned around to check the current situation.

(I, I just followed through the momentum…ahh, but, but, being alone with Ichika-san in such a tight space.)

On realizing this, she blushed. It was not because of the summer heat that her body temperature to rose, but her forehead started to sweat too.

(I, I'm not reeking of sweat, right…? I feel that the perfume should be enough…)

A maiden in love would be afraid of letting the man she likes smell her sweat, and she would feel like dying if that happened.

(I want to avoid that no matter what!)

But even so, they were packed inside the narrow space of the photo booth. Right now, there was no space for both of them to even cross their legs. The smell, the body temperature, the breathing, they could feel them all.

(What do I do now?)

DOKI DOKI! The chest cried loudly as the body temperature and heart rate went up critically.

"I, I say, Cecilia."

--DOKI!?

"Wha, what is it?"

She subconsciously answered without thinking.

Perhaps finding it too embarrassing, Cecilia used her hand to cover her mouth.

"Well—I guess. Should, shouldn't we get out?"

"Eh, tha, that…"

"Well, it's really hot…"

"Yo, you're right…"

Though her feelings as a girl were playing with her as she didn't want to go out.

But Cecilia, who suddenly backed away, rolled her eyes around at other direction and muttered.

"Is, is it because of the smell…?"

"Smell?"

Though she was just muttering, they were close together in an intimate position. Cecilia's words were heard by Ichika, and because of that, she blushed so thoroughly that even her ears went red.

"No, never mind. I do worry about the smell though…"

"U…"

"Is that perfume? It sure smells nice."

"It, it's nice!?"

"Eh, ah, yeah."

"So, I see!"

The next moment, Cecilia's face brightened.

And then, she started chatting away.

"I'm using the L'Ireal number 15 perfume today! Fufu, as expected of Ichika-san, you have quite the good taste."

Once her mood got better, Cecilia started regaining that confident master mood.

But in such a close distance, they got swallowed by the hot breath.

And Ichika blushed about this as he pulled Cecilia’s hand...

“Let’s get out, Cecilia.”

“Ah, okay.”

Cecilia nodded on instinct as she was shocked.

Her head went blank as her hand was held, and she and Ichika went outside the photo booth.

“Well, Cecilia. Who was chasing after you?”

“Erm…”

Cecilia stuttered, unable to say it out.

Seeing her like that, Ichika felt that it was better not to dwelve too deep into it.

"Mn, well. It's not that I need to understand, but where should we hide—"

Ichika continued to stare at Cecilia.

That serious look scared Cecilia.

(Do, do I look weird somewhere…? Do, don't tell me that my hair got messy when I ran away…?)

"Your outfit."

"Eh?"

"It's too eye-catching. See, everyone's looking at you. They're probably thinking 'what sort of ojou-sama is that'."

On hearing these words, Cecilia looked at her clothing.

Though her attire of the summer dress didn't feel out of place, the quality, the design, they all looked really high class.

Not to mention, it would be worth more than 1 million yen.

"You just need to change clothes."

"But I, I don't have any clothes to change to now."

Hm~ Ichika folded his arms to think of a solution, and suddenly clapped his hands.

"Let's go buy some."

"Eh?"

"It's near the shopping district here. How about it?"

Ah. Saying till there, Ichika suddenly panicked as he rummaged through his wallet.

And his face went white after seeing the contents.

"So, sorry…I'm a little shorthanded…"

"No, there's no need for that! I'll pay for it myself! I'm Cecilia Alcott, the English cadet and head of the Alcott family, you know?"

''I brought my credit cards!'' After saying that, she pulled them out. There was practically an unlimited amount of them, and she even had the unlimited black card, one of the less than 10 cards in the world.

On a side note, such card could even buy mansions worth billions or theme parks. However, without either the fingerprint identification, the cornea identification, the pulse identification, the voice identification and signature identification, it couldn't be used. It was really an amazing thing.

"Well, Cecilia, I don't think there's a shop that accepts that card."

"Eh? Why?"

"We're just going to a normal clothing shop."

"Ah, then how about this ordinary civilian card?"

However, Cecilia's so-called 'civilian card' was a platinum card worth 10 million yen.

For some reason, Ichika felt the strength sweep off his shoulders.

“Well. This card’s an ordinary credit card, so I guess you can use it.”

“That’s right. Then, let’s go.”

Saying that, Cecilia walked off cheerfully.

Ichika sighed heavily and changed his mood as he walked beside her.

"This is the shop?”

“Ah, this is the shop I was talking out. It’s popular among teenagers.”

The products were said to fit teenagers, and Ichika wondered if that was bad.

(So Cecilia isn’t suited to this, right? She’s still an ojou-sama at heart after all.)

But, what was really unexpected was that Cecilia’s eyes glittered.

"This is really refreshing! I have a lot of clothes, but I don't have anything like this at all."

"Oh, I see. That's good."

"Ye, yes…"

Cecilia suddenly squirmed and turned her hand to Ichika, who was behind her and looking up.

"If, if possible, Ichika-kun, can you choose one for me? "

"Eh? Me?"

"Ye, yes!"

"Un, I did choose Chifuyu-nee's clothing before… but is this really good? You're letting me choose."

"Of, of course!"

Cecilia declared this as she again emphasized it.

"The, then…I hope to be dyed in the color of Ichika-san…"

Her face immediately turned red as she muttered softly.

Besides, it's too embarrassing to say the truth like that, as Cecilia said that in a volume Ichika couldn't hear.

"Mn—well, leave it to me then."

"Okay!"

"Please give your orders, ojou-sama."

Ichika played a little joke, and Cecilia giggled in protest.

"Do, don't~! Don't call me ojou-sama."

"Hahaha. Sorry sorry."

"…It'd be great if Ichika-san was my personal subordinate…"

"Hm?"

"No, nothing at all! Nothing at all!"

Cecilia rubbed her hands together. Though her face was dyed like a cherry blossom, she’s showing a really happy look.

--15 minutes later.

“I, I’m done.”

On hearing Cecilia’s voice from the changing room, Ichika, who was sitting on the sofa opposite, inadvertently stood up.

“Do the sizes match?”

“It’s fine…ahem. Can you help me check this out?”

“Oh, okay, I’m good when you're ready.”

“Then.”

Shyaa. The screen was pulled aside.

Cecilia appeared and put her hands on her hip, displaying herself like a model.

Like what Ichika thought out, she was dressed in a sky-blue tears shirt to go with the black ¾ pants. She's wearing a casket hat, and she had a pair of really suitable sunglasses on her.

"How's this? My casual outfit."

"Un. It's quite good. Really suits you."

"Well, of course it suits me. O, other than that, shouldn't you compliment me with something?"

"Eh?"

"Like…c,cute…?"

Completely different from that confident look she expected, Cecilia uttered shyly, and it was so soft Ichika couldn't hear it.

"Hm? Hm~…ohh!"

Ichika clapped his hands together. Readying her pose and expecting a compliment, Cecilia's chest couldn't help but tremble.

"Your pose's really amazing!"

"I, I, Ichika-san? I, it's not that I'm unhappy about you praising me about that, bu, but that's too much."

"Just joking. You look cute in casual clothes, Cecilia."

"!! Re, really?"

"Mn."

(Ahhh, Ichika-san, Ichika-san…!)

Having been praised by Ichika for being cute or something, Cecilia's heart inadvertently bloomed like the flowers. Of course, the flowers were roses, white roses that represent nobility. (TN: I believe white roses mean eternal love, or something like that.)

Not knowing the happiness in Cecilia's heart, Ichika reached his hand over.

"There's a step. Be careful."

"Eh, ehh. Thank you."

Ichika looked like a prince escorting a princess down a carriage, making Cecilia blush in the process.

<<Orimura-sama has the natural ability to attract female gazes, right? My mistress, please be careful. Maintain your sanity and don't be lured over.>>

Chelsea's words appeared in Cecilia's mind for a moment, but it was quickly blown off at the speed of light, so fast that a Doppler phenomenon never occurred.

(Ahh. I, I'll go down and be Ichika's woman…)

Her heart seemed to be flowing with golden honey.

(If there's a need to shoot down Ichika-san's heart, I'll be the one to do that personally. Sniper of the Sky, pilot of the IS [Blue Tears]—Cecilia Alcott!)

As for the knight's soul she imagined it to be and worship—well, it didn't exist.

Cecilia's heart got so sticky that she would surrender once she saw steamed sweet potato with butter. (TN: This is a little hard to explain. Steamed sweet potato is sticky, hot butter is gooey. Sticky and gooey, get it?)

(Ahh, what a wonderful moment.)

''But it's just ordinary casual clothing!'' The mini-Ichika that seemed to be hidden in her heart said. Either way, Cecilia shot him down with the [Starlight MK III], and her heart again sank into the sea of happiness.

Her shoulders used up the 120 seconds of endurance, and her sweat turned her face into a cherry blossom.

"Then, where should we go next?"

"Eh. Ehh. I just want to go wherever Ichika-san wants to go—"

Before she could finish, Cecilia stopped herself and used Ichika's body as cover.

"? What's wrong, Ce—"

"Shh! Those men!"

Cecilia whispered as she pointed in a direction. There were two men in black suits and shades observing their surroundings and walking around.

"That was close. Cecilia, put on your shades."

"Oh, okay."

After saying that, she put the shades on her face. The attire created a mysterious elegance that shocked Ichika.

(It's like she's a Hollywood star.)

By the way, it's not rare to see the representatives and cadets of a country take part in movies, dramas, singer, models, attend concerts or musicals.

Not only that, it's to be expected of a country's ambassador to promote the fact that the country has an IS.

With the crazy fanclubs all over the world, it was really common for the girls in promotions to change their nationalities. Though a few of them were girls who wanted to be the next generation of pilots, a lot more of them are males who are attracted to them. No matter the age or the situation, this seems like it won't change at all.

"Er, erm, Ichika-san?"

"Ah, ahh, sorry. I was too engrossed."

“En, engrossed…!?”

Cecilia’s face went red again. It seemed like her face was red throughout today.

“Not good. That guy entered the shop… Cecilia.”

“…Ichika-san was too engrossed in me. Ichika-san was too engrossed in me…fufu♪"

“Cecilia? Oi, oi, hello?”

“Ye, yes!? Wh, wha, what’s the matter?”

“It’s over if you’re spotted. Stick close to me and go out.”

“Stick close?”

“Well, it’ll be alright if we lock each other's elbows.”

“!? Lo, lock each other's elbows…!?”

Having completely forgotten that she did the same to Ichika before (TN: Volume 2), Cecilia’s heart pounded, DOKI DOKI, as she kept her body close to Ichika.

"Ah, erm, that…"

"Shh, you'll attract attention if you talk."

Ichika whispered to Cecilia at a close distance, and she nodded her head hard. Her face was red all over again.

Gyuu. She grabbed Ichika's arm, and her heart felt like it was going to pop out of her mouth.

Though her chest felt a little sweet pain, her happiness outweighed it. Having become accustomed to this complicated taste, Cecilia and Ichika walked out of the room.

Even through their clothes, she could feel those trained muscles. On realizing that, Cecilia's heart pounded, DOKI DOKI, as she continued to walk.

(If I'm hugged tightly by this elbow…)

''My maiden circuits would be completely wrecked.''

Thinking about this, Cecilia exhaled some hot air as she sighed.

"KYAAAHHH!!"

Cecilia, who was walking with Ichika, let out a shrill cry.

"Ar, are you alright?"

"Bu, but…but…"

In the darkness, Cecilia hugged onto Ichika's elbow tightly.

It was a dark hidden room with only two people—of course not. It was the cinema.

In the end, to avoid the men in black suits and shades, Ichika and Cecilia went into the nearest cinema…

"I, I've never been able to take such horrifying stuff."

Cecilia dragged Ichika in without checking the content of the movie.

However, it was not the man-made horror movies like zombies and monsters, but a documentary that showed real life in a more gruesome manner.

"Uu…"

Ever since the beginning, Cecilia's arm never left Ichika's elbow.

"If, if you're that scared, should we go out?"

"Bu, but, aren't we not allowed to stand up when the movie's showing?... We won't be discovered easily if we mix into the crowd…KYAAAAAHHH!!!"

Gulp~

"Are you alright, Cecilia?"

Ichika stroked Cecilia's head gently.

The soft touch of that hand made Cecilia sigh.

"Ahh…"

"Okay. It's not scary, not scary."

"…"

If it was the usual Cecilia, perhaps she would go ‘don’t do that, I’m not a child anymore’ and push the hand away, but it really felt good to be stroked by Ichika.

(Ichika-san’s hand’s really gentle…)

Her eyes couldn’t help but close.

She sighed, giving off a radiance that a 15-year-old shouldn’t have.

…

……

……

“Well—we were scared in the end.”

“Tha, that’s right.”

After watching the movie, Cecilia’s words became really vague, unlike the satisfied Ichika.

She completely memorized the ending and content of the movie (and she didn't feel scared anymore because of that.)

"Bu, but, the following movies are rather good. Li, lik, like for example, romance or something—"

"Huh? What's that kid doing there?"

"Well, are you listening?"

Cecilia forcefully pinched Ichika's arm, and this hurt more than expected as Ichika couldn't help but cringe.

"It hurts. So, sorry. But, the kid over there, is she lost?"

"Eh?"

After Ichika said that, Cecilia turned to look in the direction Ichika's finger was pointing.

"Uunn…uuuueehn…"

Like what he said, there was a girl crying there.

"…"

Cecilia let go of Ichika's arm and walked to the girl.

"What's wrong?"

Cecilia's eyes met the girls, and she pulled her handkerchief out to wipe the girl's tears.

"Un…ueeehhn…"

But only the crying remained, and Cecilia couldn't understand at all.

Even so, Cecilia's gentle look made the girl calm down gradually as she continued to wipe the tears off.

"See, don't cry. Girls can't cry in front of others so loudly."

"Ueh…uu…gusuu…"

The girl finally stopped crying, and Cecilia praised her 'you did well'.

The girl was really happy, and finally started to talk about what happened.

"Pa, papa and mama are gone…"

"Where did you lose them?"

Ichika, who waited silently behind Cecilia, finally spoke on seeing that the girl calmed down.

Nobody knew when he bought a candy stick as he held it in his hand.

"Okay, you'll feel better once you try it."

"U, un…"

"Then, where did you lose papa and mama?"

"The park."

"The park?"

"Un…I chased after a kitty, and I ended up in a place I don't know…ueh…"

She was definitely anxious. Most likely, the girl thought of how she lost sight of her parents as her eyes teared up again.

"Erm, your name?"

"Yu, Yuri…" (TN: In hiragana, ゆ)

"Yuri…'Zephyranthes'. That's a nice name."

"Zephyran…?"

"That's what 'Yuri's called in English." (TN: Yuri would mean 百, Lily, and Zephyranthes is the genus of Lily.)

"Fuu…"

Yuri felt that it was refreshing to hear an English word she never heard before, and though puzzled, she stopped crying.

Then, she started licking the candy Ichika bought for her, and then smiled.

"This is really good!"

"Really? Glad you like it."

"Yep!"

Yuri seemed to like it a lot as she licked the candy stick like she was in dreamland.

"Then, let's find the parents. There should be a park nearby if we walk from the north exit of the train station. "

Ichika pulled his phone out and downloaded the images from the internet. Since there were obvious landmarks in the park, she should be able to spot it by comparing.

"Yuri-chan, does that park have this stone there?"

"Nn…I think so…"

"Okay, it's the Odawara Park already. Let's go then."

After saying that, Ichika held Yuri's hand.

"It's not good to get lost."

"I can't go with people I don't know, papa and mama sa…"

"Th, that'll be really troublesome if they said that."

"Ara, he's not someone you don't know. Have you seen 'Orimura Ichika' on TV before?"

"Ah. I remember seeing him on some special channel."

"On some special channel?"

"Ichika-san's famous, you know? Because 'he's the only male IS pilot in the world', isn't that right?"

"Ahh! I heard of that! The 'only one'!"

Yuri, most likely, she remembered what her mother commented about on seeing the TV channel as she shouted out.

"O, onii-chan. Are you an actor!?"

"No, I'm not some actor."

"Bu, but, you're the 'only one'!"

"Ah—yes."

"A, amazing! People who appeared on TV."

Perhaps Yuri was touched because of something Ichika didn't know of, as her eyes were glittering. Most likely,

the people on TV affected real life badly, and they would want to get a signature of an actor they like, or something like that.

“Therefore, he’s ‘someone you know’, right?”

“Un! Yes!”

“Let’s go then.”

Bringing Yuri, who believed them, Ichika started walking.

But after a few steps, Yuri stopped.

“What’s wrong?”

“Un.”

She pointed her finger at Cecilia, and just when Cecilia was about to have a ‘?’ above her head, Yuri spoke up.

“Onee-chan, you need to hold hands with Yuri too!”

“So you want to hold hands together tightly, right?”

“Ahh, I see.”

Still thinking of why there was a need to 'hold hands', Cecilia finally understood Ichika's words.

And then, she walked to the other side of Ichika—and grabbed Yuri's right hand as the three of them walked side by side.

"Wa—i♪"

The trio held hands as they walked together.

While walking to the park, Cecilia remembered her past.

(I think, I was about 5 that time…)

During the time when both parents were still around, and when both husband and wife had a good relationship.

During autumn, the trio would walk on the ground of the park that was covered with fallen leaves.

Like how the trio were holding hands together.

(At that time…I was happy that my parents, who were busy with work, could come out to spend time…)

It was simple happiness, not a trace of confusion.

Thinking about that, the kind smiles of her parents were all the more colorful.

--It's just that this was the last memory she had of her parents being together.

After that, both husband and wife started to have a divide growing between them, until only Cecilia was left alone.

To attract her parents attention, she started learning piano, violin and other things.

Whenever she had a performance, without fail, only her father or mother would show up alone.

(Mom…dad…)

''I really want to meet them.''

Right now, as a representative candidate, she would definitely be praised by both of them.

And one day, she would show that smile like how it was that day.

--I want to see them. I want to see them. I want to see them.

She recalled the reluctant lonely times.

“Ce, Cecilia…?”

“Eh…?”

Unknowingly, Cecilia’s face was full of tears.

“Ah, are…? That’s strange.”

Her tears dripped down.

The sudden change shocked Ichika, who was holding onto the handkerchief, panicking and not knowing what to do.

At that moment, Yuri, who’s holding Cecilia’s hand, said to her clearly.

“Onee-chan. Girls can’t cry in front of others.”

“Fufu, you’re right…mn, I’m alright.”

Now that the young girl pointed that out to her, Cecilia sad feelings were swept away as she used her fingers to wipe her tears.

--That’s right, she was no longer "that" Cecilia.

Even if she was no longer able to meet her parents again, she was not alone now.

In Japan, this foreign land, she met her classmates and friends.

And also, the person she likes.

So, she was not alone anymore—

She thought deep within her heart.

Either way, if she were offensive against others, she would end up being alone. Right now, Cecilia could calmly realize this.

(I’m a bad, bad child.)

But, that was in the past.

The lonely her who always tried to act tough no longer remained.

(I like Ichika-san—)

''Yes, if I keep such honest thoughts.''

''I'm no longer, alone.''

''The world, is so wonderful.''

At sunset in the park, looking down from the high platform onto the street, one could find Ichika and Cecilia sitting on the bench.

"It's great that we found that kid's parents immediately."

"Yes."

Most likely, they ran around looking for their child, as the father kept thanking Ichika and Cecilia.

As for the mother, she was crying non-stop because her beloved daughter's here.

Most likely, Ichika and Cecilia would never forget the way Yuri smiled and squealed when she saw her parents.

“Ichika-san.”

“Hm?”

“Thank you very much for today.”

Ichika couldn’t help but be stunned for being thanked so suddenly.

“Actually, I escaped.”

“Ahh, from those black suits?”

“No, it’s not really like that—”

Just when Cecilia was about to say something, a boom was heard.

Batabatabatabatabatabata.

Suddenly, a helicopter flew overhead.

And the person beside the pilot’s seat was someone Ichika met before.

“Ojou-samaa~!”

“Chelsea-san!?”

“You’re not allowed to leave your work! And on top of that, running away as the head of the Alcott family!”

Lecturing forcefully, she had a sniper rifle on her knee, but it was better to ignore it.

Cecilia got up from her bench and walked to the helicopter.

“Ehh, Chelsea. Right now, I won’t run away anymore.”

On hearing Cecilia’s words, Chelsea heaved a sigh of relief as she patted her chest, and kept the sniper rifle on her knee.

The wind from the rotor blades nearby blew the casket hat off. Cecilia held it down with her hand and waved to Ichika.

“Besides, I’m Cecilia Alcott—”

That face was showing an elegant smile,

“A first-class lady.”

That night—

"…"

Cecilia hugged the casket hat on the bed.

The hat Ichika chose was really cute.

"What happened today is my precious memory."

A summer date.

Though the sunlight was hot, and so hot it was unbearable.

"Good night, Ichika-san."

Chuu…

With a kiss on the casket hat, Cecilia closed her eyes slowly.

That night, what she dreamed was a girl's secret…